

AIDE MEMOIRE  
AFRICA'S SUBMISSION  
TO THE  
6th SESSION  
OF THE  
INCD

New York, January 1995

**I. BACKGROUND: REFERENCE TO THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE RESOLUTION ON URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA**

At its fifth session in June 1994, the INCD having adopted a text of the UN Convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, also adopted resolution 5/1 on urgent action for Africa. In this particular resolution, the INCD outlined a series of actions and measures to be taken by the affected African countries during the interim period with a view to creating the necessary enabling environment for a speedy implementation of the convention in those countries most severely affected, particularly in Africa as follows:

- i. To disseminate information and promote education and public awareness about the objectives of the Convention;
- ii. To take urgent steps, in particular, to prepare national and sub-regional action programmes or, where action programmes exist, such as national environmental action plans, to review and improve them, if necessary, and implement them, consistent with the objectives of the Convention;
- iii. To designate coordinating bodies at the national and sub-regional levels, and if necessary, at the regional level for the implementation of the present resolution;
- iv. To establish, at national and sub-regional levels, in the affected African countries, partnership arrangements with the relevant developed countries, intergovernmental regional economic organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the affected local populations to facilitate the coordination of activities, to be initiated by the individual African country concerned;

## II. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Aide Memoire is to provide information on the specific measures and actions taken or proposed to be taken by the African countries during the interim period in the context of the implementation of resolution 5/1. In addition, the purpose is also to launch an appeal to the developed countries as well as international and multilateral organizations stated in resolution 5/1 to provide support and mobilize the necessary resource for the implementation of the urgent action for Africa.

## III. REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION 5/1 ON URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA

2. In response to the resolution on urgent action for Africa, the affected African countries and their sub-regional and regional organizations have undertaken various activities at national, sub-regional and regional levels. At the regional level, the OAU Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts has prepared a reference document as a framework for implementing the urgent action for Africa at all levels during the interim period prior to the entry into force of the Convention OAU/EXP.GROUP/INC-D/7/1994/1.

3. In order to better prepare Africa for the 6th INCD, a meeting was held in New York from 6 to 8 January 1995, at the request of the Minister for the Environment of Burkina Faso, in his capacity as the President of the African Desert and Arid Land Committee (ADALCO) with the approval of the OAU Secretary General who has been coordinating the activities of the African Group throughout the INCD process. The purpose of the meeting was twofold;

- i. to review the status of implantation of the resolution 5/1 on Urgent Action for Africa and to outline the measures and activities to be undertaken by the African affected countries during the interim period;
- ii. to prepare Africa for the effective participation in and contribution to the 6th session of INCD.

4. The review is also based on the actions and measures spelled out in documents prepared by the sub-regional organizations as well as those prepared by the OAU Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts. The review encompasses the activities undertaken and those planned.

**A = ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN**

**i - at National level**

5. Most affected African countries are at the initiation stage of organizing campaigns for public awareness and putting in place the necessary machinery for the ratification of the Convention. A few countries have taken steps for launching the national action programmes process. Of the total number of countries who have signed the Convention to date about half are African countries.

**ii - at Sub-regional level**

6. The relevant sub-regional organizations have undertaken a series of actions with a view to set-up the institutional/organizational framework to support both the preparation of national and sub-regional action programmes. The following is a summary of the actions and measures undertaken in the various sub-regions.

**a) Central Africa**

7. Only part of this sub-region is affected and hence there is no institutions dealing with activities related to combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought.

**b) Eastern Africa (IGADD)**

8. The IGADD sub-region organized a high level sub-regional workshop to harmonize the modalities for the implementation of the Convention, both in the context of existing and planned programmes activities. Accordingly, it was agreed that the existing five-year programme which was presented to the donor committee should be reviewed in the context of the provisions of the Convention. Six member States of IGADD have so far signed the Convention. In conformity with the provisions in the Convention, the IGADD Member states have agreed that:

- i. IGADD will play a central role in assisting member states in the preparation and elaboration of sub-regional programmes in conformity with the relevant provisions of the convention,
- ii. IGADD will review its existing institutional arrangements including its five-year programme with a view to prioritizing necessary activities and streamlining coordination mechanisms, taking into account existing institutional capacity in the sub-region.

- iii. IGADD will review and intensify its efforts in institutionalizing its relationship with developed country parties to the Convention, multilateral organizations and other agencies at all levels,
- iv. In order for IGADD to discharge these , there is a need for developed country parties, multilateral organizations and other agencies to increase their support to IGADD.

c) Northern Africa (UMA)

9. To initiate the implementation of the Convention in that Sub-region, UMA organized an international meeting on desertification control in the Maghreb region. The member states agreed on the following issues:

- i. The need for a sub-regional strategic framework to define orientations, priorities and actions to be undertaken to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;
- ii. The involvement and effective participation of concerned countries in all the steps for the preparation of the sub-regional action programme;
- iii. The need of coherence between national programmes and the sub-regional action programmes.

d) Southern Africa (SADC)

10. The SADC sub-region has initiated a number of activities to raise public awareness on the Convention amongst its member states. Such activities were undertaken with a view to ensure rapid implementation of the resolution on the Urgent Action for Africa. In addition, the sub-region is revising the "SADC Sub-Regional Case Study for Drought and Desertification" according to the sub-regional workshop recommendations of June 1994. The revised version with priority action programmes will be discussed at a sub-regional workshop to be held in March 1995.

f) Western Africa (CILSS)

11. Soon after the adoption of the International Convention on Desertification, CILSS convened all its experts with a view to :

- a - initiating reflexion on the implementation of the international Convention ;
- b - undertaking a more in-depth re-reading of the Convention ; and
- c - working out interim operational plan covering the short term period from July to December 1994 and the medium term for the transitional period.

12. The outcome of the meeting served as basis for the two experts meetings held respectively at Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in September 1994 and at Bamako (Mali) in December 1994.

13. The Experts meeting of September 1994 was followed by a consultative meeting of Ministers responsible for the Environment in CILSS Member states.

14. The consultative meeting offered an opportunity to review the activities undertaken at national and sub-regional levels in consonance with resolution 5/1 and took important decisions as contained in the Ouagadougou Declaration.

15. All these meetings were attended by the nine CILSS member states, some of the neighboring countries in West Africa (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Togo) and NGOs in the Sub-region. The meetings also considered the implementation of the Convention during the interim period with special attention paid to the activities already undertaken and those to be undertaken.

iii - At Regional level

16. The OAU, through the ad hoc Working Group of Experts, prepared a document outlining a series of possible activities affected african countries may undertake, during the interim period prior to the entry into force of the Convention.

17. In addition, the Secretary-General has prepared a comprehensive report on the status of the INCD negotiations to be submitted to the Sixty-first Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers to be held from 23-27 January 1995 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The report is in response to paragraph five (5) of the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and is meant to constitute part of regional activities to disseminate information and promote education and public awareness about the objectives of the convention.

#### IV. URGENT MEASURES/ACTION DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

##### i - at National level

18. Most affected african countries are at an initial stage of elaborating measures related to the national action programmes process with a view to eventually integrating such measures into the national sustainable development framework. A few countries have embarked on the initial steps for the establishment of an organizational framework on the building of consensus and partnership arrangements.

##### CILSS member states

19. have agreed to convene national fora as the best settings for the launching of the participation process for the preparation and implementation of national action programmes.

20. As a pre-requisite to the holding of the national fora, the Governments of the CILSS member states undertake to:

- a - reiterate first of all, their commitment to make the implementation of the Convention a priority taking into account the resolution on urgent measures for Africa;
- b - put in place or, if necessary, strengthen the structure where the main responsibility will be the preparation of the National Forum.

21. The preparation of the national fora will be preceded by country-specific information and awareness-building campaigns. However, there are activities considered necessary for all the countries. These include:

- a - organization of talks and discussions in the media;
- b - extensive dissemination of the text of the Convention;
- c - dissemination, in leaflet form, of the summary of the Convention for the public at large ;
- d - translation as well as dissemination of the summary of the Convention in national languages .

22. In addition, national and financial resources will be mobilized to cover the convening of the National fora and the preparation of the national Action Programmes. A clear distinction has been made, however, between the financial resources and mechanisms for the preparation of the national Action Programmes and those for their implementation.

23. Each member strongly commit itself, within the national budgetary allocation of financial resources, to establish a national and/or regional fund with its participatory management mechanism. the fund would be supplied through the State Investment budget and other innovative resource mobilization mechanisms (i.e.:specific taxes). Popular actions for funds raising would also be initiated (solidarity funds) as well as contributions from the national NGOs.

24. An appeal will be made to the International Community for external resources through the funds earmarked for the purpose and the resources from our partners through bilateral and multilateral cooperation arrangements and from international NGOs for both the preparation and implementation of the National Action Programmes.

25. In response to the important issue of participatory approach, attention will be paid to the ways and means of ensuring a quantitative and qualitative participation of the various partners in the implementation of the Convention.

26. CILSS member states have undertaken to hold the National fora before the end of the first half of 1995, in view of the time needed to prepare the National fora efficiently and also of the urgency about the launching of the participatory process.

27. The consultations at a national forum should lead to the adoption of the national action programme, after confirmation by all the relevant institutions and the higher Authorities.

28. However, some CILSS member states already have projects ready to be funded during the interim period with the financial contributions already made (Burkina Faso, The Gambia).

ii - at Sub-regional level

29. The relevant sub-regional organizations have identified specific actions and measures to be undertaken in the context of implementing the resolution on the urgent action for Africa. Such actions and measures are as follows:

a) Central Africa

30. The sub-regional is planning to hold a seminar shortly with the support of the international partners concerned. The seminar will mark the launching of the sub-regional information and public awareness campaign. On that occasion the countries of the sub-region will conduct consultations with a view to designation the relevant sub-regional intergovernmental organizations with the responsibility to prepare and implement the sub-regional action programme, consistent with the provisions of the Convention.

b) Eastern Africa (IGADD)

31. The IGADD sub-region has agreed on a number of activities to be carried out in a span of about two years as follows:

- member states sensitization on the Convention;
- initiation of relevant law reforms;
- assessment and elaboration of actions planned on national and sub-regional levels;
- establishment of coordination and harmonization mechanism; and
- establishment of networks within the sub-region.

32. With regard to sensitization of member states on the Convention, the IGADD sub-region is planning to prepare sensitization materials for specific target groups with a view to enhance public awareness. A second sub-regional high decision making workshop is envisaged for April 1995.

33. Regarding the initiation of relevant law reforms the following activities are envisaged:

- review the laws that are likely to impede the implementation of the Convention in all Member states.
- undertake out a special study on land tenure issues in all Member states affecting the implementing of the Convention;
- elaborate and make recommendations for the harmonization of cross-boundary environment related laws;
- hold a sub-regional workshop to review the legal issues resulting from the studies and make recommendations to be considered at a high level policy and decision makers sub-regional meeting.

34. The following activities have been planned at national and sub-regional levels for the IGADD sub-region:

- a - examination and updating of the IGADD strategy for the preparation of a framework for the implementation of the national and sub-regional actions programmes;
- b - revision of the five-year IGADD Plan so as to bring it into tune with the Convention;
- c - assisting member states to prepare their actions plans as follows:
  - i. as a follow-up to the national workshops, a summary of the approach and the elements needed for the national action plans, including the interpretation and implementation of the participatory approach, will be prepared;

- ii. make the summary available to member states so that they may make their comments and communicate their requirements to the IGADD Secretariat;
- iii. ensure that the Actions Plans are prepared in conformity with the principles established through the national workshops in member states and a sub-regional workshop for coordinators.

c) Northern Africa (UMA)

35. The Northern African sub-region has planned the following activities to be undertaken in the context of the implementation of the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa:

- establishment within a six-months-time frame of permanent consultative and coordination mechanisms at sub-regional level for sub-regional desertification control activities preparation, implementation and follow-up;
- finalization of national action programmes to combat desertification in member states and harmonization of the actions programmes as well as national approaches and strategies while taking into consideration sub-regional and national experiences in each member state;
- coordination of the sub-regional programme to combat desertification with existing or anticipated regional or international activities including those under implementation in CILSS, IGADD, OSS sub-region;
- ensuring the signature and ratification of the Convention by member states and initiation of action in favor of building broad international community consensus and active participation in the implementation and follow-up action;

- initiation within a twelve-months-time frame, of the establishment of a sub-regional consultative mechanism with international partners aimed, at concluding partnership arrangements and ensuring coordination and harmonization of the process of the implementation of the Convention and the regional annex for Africa.

d) Southern Africa (SADC)

36. The Southern sub-region has yet to identify the priority actions for environmental sustainable development in the context of implementing the resolutions on Urgent Action for Africa. A seminar is planned to address the following issues:

- i. the dissemination of information and promotion of education and public awareness about the objectives of the Convention;
- ii. the designation of national and sub-regional action coordinating bodies;
- iii. the preparation of national and sub-regional action programmes and/or adaptation and improvement of existing national action programmes, in conformity with the Convention;
- iv. the assessment of capacities at national and sub-regional levels and capacity building and training of experts;
- v. the establishment of partnership arrangements in the sub-region.

e) Western Africa (CILSS)

37. The Experts meeting followed by the consultative meeting of the Ministers responsible for Environment in CILSS member states held in September 1994 at Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) mandated CILSS to "serve as a Liaison Center and in that capacity offer its experience and expertise to other states of the sub-region".

38. The consultative meeting of the Ministers responsible for Environment in CILSS member states also decided that a sub-regional action Programme for CILSS member states be prepared in conformity with Article 4 of the Convention and article 10 of the Regional implementation Annex for Africa.

39. The Programme will be open to other countries and sub-regions on the basis of the specific sub-programmes contained therein.

40. The meeting requested CILSS, as the Liaison Centre, to leave no stone unturned in ensuring that a sub-regional action programme is prepared and completed within a maximum period of 12 months, from the date of the signing of the Convention.

41. In compliance with the decision of the Ministers of Environment of CILSS member states, the Executive Secretariat prepared a provisional outline of the sub-regional Action Programme with its various components and submitted it on 15 October 1994 to the Sahelian Ministers attending the ceremony marking the signing of the International Convention on Desertification.

42. Furthermore, CILSS prepared a three-year Plan covering 1995-1997 which its relevant bodies adopted. The implementation of the activities contained in the Three-years plan will enhance the implementation of the international Convention on desertification.

43. In concrete terms, CILSS has, for the transitional period, a series of programmes and projects that are in consonance with the Convention and implementable immediately if funds are available. These programmes and projects include the Regional Multi-media Information and Awareness-building campaign on the Environment (PRISME); projects in the field of information such as "the inventory of existing data and their assembly at the AGRHYMET Centre and the purchase of Satellite pictures of the Sahel region"; "Occupation of the coastal regions of the Sahel and Mapping of the state saline soil"; "Mapping of the vegetation cover"; Environment monitoring: ecology and bio-diversity, etc". Project documents are also ready for short-term training courses (6 to 8 weeks duration) at the AGRHYMET Centre and in Member states and specialized training courses of longer duration (2 to 4 years). There is also a project intended to update the collection and use of the AGRHYMET Centre's Library as part of natural resource management and environment monitoring; The Sahelian education on the environment project (Secondary School Level) and the integrated phytosanitary management project.

44. The CILSS is therefore seeking the support of the international community and cooperation partners to complement the financing of the project activities which are still without funding.

iii. at regional level

45. Specific measures to be undertaken during the interim period are envisaged as follows:

- i. preparation and initiation of the implementation of the regional action programme;
- ii. facilitation/promotion of negotiation of specific arrangements for funding through the AFDB and ADF and other relevant funds to support national, sub-regional and regional action programmes;
- iii. setting up the mechanisms for the follow-up arrangements at regional level in accordance with the provisions of the Regional African Annex.
- iv. undertake urgent measures to clarify the institutional framework for such follow-up mechanism in accordance with the provisions of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community;
- v. initiatives to encourage rapid ratification of the Convention by African country parties, developed country parties and countries in other affected regions;
- vi. initiate modalities for extending the mandate of the Emergency Fund for drought and Famine in Africa to cover the implementation of provisions of the Convention and the African Annex.

IV - SUPPORT REQUIRED FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL AND MULTI-LATERAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE URGENT ACTION AND MEASURES

46. During the interim phase, substantial support would be required from the developed countries and the international and multi-lateral organizations, to enable affected African country parties to develop new generation action programmes successfully, put in place effective coordination mechanisms, mobilize resources and undertake other measures related to the implementation of the Convention.

47. Other important stake holders including private sector organizations as well as NGOs, and the United Nations system in accordance with paragraph 4 and 6 of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa have a major supporting role to play in this respect. Additionally, African regional and sub-regional organizations specified in paragraph 5 of the Resolution will also have to provide support for the implementation of the key strategic areas envisaged to be undertaken at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

48. Indeed, other organizations with specific mandates in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought may also provide support within their areas of competence. There is however a need to identify the specific roles and responsibilities both for the developed countries and the international and multi-lateral organizations.

a. Developed countries

49. Support from the developed countries is required for the purpose of financing the following activities:

- i. enhancement of the capacities of the affected countries to prepare and implement the national action programmes;
- ii. launching national fora and establishing partnership arrangements;
- iii. sensitization/public awareness campaigns;
- iv. promotion of participatory approach in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention;
- v. establishment of sub-regional and regional coordinating mechanisms;
- vi. identification of priority action/measures at the local level through the national action programme process.

50. In addition, support should be provided to identify and strengthen existing financial mechanisms at national, sub-regional and regional levels, as well as, international funds with specific focus for Africa.

## **b. International Organizations.**

- i. support for the mobilization of key actors and sensitization, public awareness activities;**
  
- iii. technical support for the elaboration of project activities in the context of the action programme processes at national level;**
  
- iii. development and application of participatory approaches in programme/project identification, design, implementation and evaluation of natural resources management activities;**
  
- iv. support to governments to identify and put in place innovative resource mobilization strategies and set up national desertification funds;**
  
- v. review of existing national strategic plans, e.g. NEAPSS, and other on-going initiatives and re-orientation to ensure conformity in line with the objectives of the convention;**
  
- vi. building capacity and assisting in re-orienting technical cooperation to support the convention;**
  
- vii. advocacy of dryland issues in international economic fora and contributing to creation of enabling economic environment;**
  
- viii. facilitating and encouraging exchange of experiences with other affected regions and catalyzing technology transfer and adaptation in fields such as bio-technology, energy, development and management of water resources and drought monitoring.**

V - **COMMITMENT OF THE AFFECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD**

*Affected African countries commit themselves to:*

- i. establish within a six-twelve months-time frame a forum at national level and setting-up mechanisms to facilitate the convening of the first meeting of the forum establish partnership arrangements;*
- ii. ratify the Convention by the end of 1995;*
- iii. initiate within six months elaboration of national action programmes ensuring participatory approaches in the preparation as well as the implementation and monitoring of actions;*
- iv. designate and/or establish National coordinating body before June 1995;*
- v. initiate within twelve months from the signing of the Convention, the process of elaboration of national and sub-regional action programmes;*
- vi. initiate innovative strategies for the mobilization of domestic resources for the implementation of the resolution on urgent action for Africa.-*

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